WEST VIRGINIA STATE
Electronic Mail (E-mail) Suggested Guidelines

INTRODUCTION
Effective: 12/17/2003

Use of the electronic mail systems (e-mail) is an essential means of daily communications, both internally and externally, for West Virginia state agencies. Often, e-mail messages include important information relative to a project or business transaction. This information may be received in the body of the e-mail or as an attached file and may serve to provide specific project or work documentation.

In receiving e-mail, employees must carefully consider the content of the message and any attachments and decide as to whether it should be retained (saved). Employees should make the decision to save the information using the same rules as they would if the information were received in paper form. Employees should consult with the immediate supervisor whenever unsure as to the need for retaining an e-mail or attached file.

ELECTRONIC MAIL RETENTION POLICIES
Effective: **12/17/2003**

A. EMPLOYEE'S/USER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees sending or receiving e-mail must:

1. Ensure that any messages sent or received that are deemed to be departmental transactions or "records" are retained in accordance with established retention policies for similar information.
2. Retain e-mail messages or "records" either as a printed copy or as an electronic file.

    a. Store printed e-mail messages in the relevant subject matter file as would be done with any other printed communication.
    b. Save electronic e-mail messages to a storage medium (tape, diskette, hard-drive) on the device (personal computer, server, etc.) as designated by the immediate supervisor.

3. File e-mail messages or "records" and keep them in such a manner as to ensure the message or file is:

    a. accessible;
    b. protected from unauthorized access;
    c. protected from alteration of any kind;
    d. and protected from physical damage or loss.

4. Once retained, the original e-mail must be deleted from the e-mail server.
5. "Non-record" e-mail should be deleted from the e-mail server regularly.

E-MAIL SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES
Effective: 12/17/2003

E-Mail System Administrators must:

1. Retain general e-mail operating system files for efficient disaster recovery of the e-mail system. Back-up files and disaster recovery files are for restoring operations in the event of loss or damage to the e-mail system. They are not intended for e-mail or "record" retention purposes.

Adopted by WV Information Technology Council 12/17/2003

2. Keep e-mail back-up files for no more than three weeks. The files (e-mail messages) on the back-up tapes, disks, etc., can be overwritten as a normal practice.
3. E-mail messages on the e-mail server will be kept a maximum of 90 days unless deleted beforehand by the receiver of the message. E-mail messages on the server that are over 90 days old will be automatically deleted.

C. **ORGANIZATION MANAGERS' AND SUPERVISORS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Organization managers and supervisors will:

1. Ensure that all employees who receive or send e-mail messages read and understand these policies as well as any related document retention policies.
2. Prescribe rules, if required, for what kinds of e-mail "records" or messages must be retained as printed copies or must be retained as electronic files.
3. Ensure that appropriate storage medium and storage devices are accessible to employees and ensure that proper security measures are in place including the prevention of alteration of any kind and the prevention of unauthorized access.

E-MAIL ACCESS AND MONITORING POLICIES
Effective: 12/17/2003

A. **ACCESSING OTHER EMPLOYEE'S E-MAIL**

1. The use of state computers and the computer network are reserved for business-use only; e-mail transmissions, messages or file contents may be accessed by authorized personnel.
2. Agency management may request access to the e-mail communications of employees in the specific state agency.

   a. All requests must be in writing and signed by the requesting manager.
   b. All requests must include identification information (author, recipient, date, subject of e-mail needed, etc.) as well as a justification for accessing the e-mail.
   c. Immediate access, justified by the need to conduct urgent WV state business, may be gained to the e-mail of others by contacting your immediate supervisor, with approval given by both the agency's administration and technical authority.

3. At the direction of agency management, the Chief of Information Systems or his/her designees may access and disclose e-mail or files of any employee with just cause, provided that such access and disclosure follows any applicable law, policies and procedures. Just cause includes:

   a. the need to protect system security,
   b. the fulfillment of WV state obligations,
   c. the detection of employee wrongdoing,
   d. the compliance with legal processes,
   e. the protection of the rights or property of the state

B. **MONITORING E-MAIL**

1. Neither the agency's management nor members of the agency's IT department will routinely monitor e-mail transmissions or messages. However, these transmissions may be monitored, without prior notification, for the following reasons:

   a. to protect system security,
   b. to detect employee wrongdoing,

Adopted by WV Information Technology Council 12/17/2003

      c.   to comply with legal processes,
      d.   and to protect the rights or property of the state.

2.   In the event that e-mail messages observed by the agency's management or his/her designee appear to have violated laws, policies or procedures, the evidence will be referred to the proper entity for appropriate action.

3.   Agency management may request the monitoring of e-mail communications of subordinates in accordance with the same rules listed in the preceding "Accessing Other Employee's E-Mail."